



## Moving Michigan Forward: Building the MDOT I-75 Gateway Project





JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
LANSING

JOHN D. CHERRY, JR.  
LT. GOVERNOR

As governor of the great state of Michigan it is my pleasure to join you in celebrating the opening of the new pedestrian bridge in the Mexicantown community. This is a great day for not only Mexicantown, but for the city of Detroit and the state of Michigan as well.

Twenty-five years ago, Mexicantown leaders envisioned a future in which their community would be a center for tourism and economic development. There would be a welcome center to greet visitors from around the world, a Mercado to support local merchants, office space to attract new businesses and jobs, and beautiful public spaces that all could enjoy. And today, that dream is one step closer to reality.

The new Mexicantown Bagley Avenue Pedestrian Bridge Plaza, with its state-of-the-art cable-stayed pedestrian bridge, reunites east and west Mexicantown; and the inspirational public art project designed by Michigan artist Hubert Massey is truly a community treasure.

This beautiful urban landscape, which is now more than 95 percent complete, is part of the \$230 million MDOT I-75 Gateway Project. It is a vitally important economic development project to which we remain committed to completing.

On this Cinco de Mayo, I congratulate the people of Mexico on the bicentennial of Mexican independence. To the people of Mexicantown, I congratulate you on the grand opening of the new pedestrian bridge. And to everyone who has worked on the MDOT I-75 Gateway Project for the past 25 years – congratulations on a job well done.



Sincerely yours,

Jennifer M. Granholm  
Governor





**The challenge:** Reconfigure the junction between two nations at the world's busiest international border and reunite one of Detroit's oldest communities.

**The solution:** A \$230 million investment to take 10,000 trucks per day off local streets, bring millions of visitors to the door of the Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center, relieve congestion, increase safety, and improve travel on I-75 and I-96.

On Monday, Feb. 25, 2008, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) began

major construction on Phase 4 of the MDOT I-75 Gateway Project.

The goals were ambitious:

- To provide direct access between the Ambassador Bridge and Michigan's freeway system
- To direct tourists and visitors to the Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado
- To accommodate future traffic on ramps connecting the Ambassador Bridge Plaza

and the I-75 and I-96 freeways

- To reconstruct sections of the I-75 and I-96 freeways
- To improve safety by removing trucks and traffic congestion from local streets near the bridge

But the vision of the Gateway Project was even more expansive:

- Driving economic growth through increased tourism and trade for the community, the region and the state

- Preserving Michigan jobs by ensuring that the Detroit-Windsor border remains the preferred crossing for U.S.-Canadian trade
- Forging a bond between government and community by creating a public plaza unique in its art, architecture and beauty
- Improving access to the over 600 small businesses in southwest Detroit
- Connecting neighbors and reuniting a community





JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
LANSING

Kirk T. Steudle  
DIRECTOR

It is my pleasure to extend greetings and congratulations from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to the Mexicantown community on the opening of the new Mexicantown Bagley Avenue Pedestrian Bridge and Plaza.

MDOT has been connected to the people of Mexicantown and the city of Detroit throughout the 25 years with which we have been associated with the Gateway Project. From the very beginning, we were determined to construct a project that would provide for the safe movement of people and goods through this vital corridor while preserving Mexicantown's unique role as a family neighborhood and tourist destination. We worked hard to involve and include local residents and businesses every step of the way.

One of our primary goals was to build a pedestrian bridge that would reunite east and west and enable residents of all ages to cross safely and securely. We believe the result is state-of-the-art. We secured the federal grant for a public art project to be installed here because we believed it was important to give Mexicantown a local landmark that would designate the bridge as an important part of this community's history.

While the Gateway Project is more than 95 percent complete, be assured that our commitment to this community is as strong as ever and will continue for years to come. MDOT believes in Mexicantown. We are proud to work with and for the residents of this wonderful community.



Sincerely,

Kirk T. Steudle  
State Transportation Director





### **Driving the Economy: The Detroit-Windsor International Border Crossing**

The Detroit-Windsor International Border Crossing is a powerful regional, state and national economic force. Here are the numbers: In 2006, more than \$115 billion in international trade passed between the U.S. and Canada. Of that total, \$73 billion – or two-thirds – was transported through Michigan with the majority passing through Detroit and Windsor. In 2007, it was estimated that U.S.-Canadian

trade supported 7.1 million jobs in the U.S., including over 200,000 in Michigan. This trade is key to the success of thousands of Michigan businesses, large and small. Given these statistics, it is hard to overstate the importance of the Detroit-Windsor International Border Crossing to our city, state and nation.

But a 1994 study demonstrated that the infrastructure at the border was already strained and forecasted that it would not accommodate future traffic volumes.

Everyone understood that it was vital for the Detroit-Windsor border to remain the route of choice. So MDOT, along with the City of Detroit and the Detroit International Bridge Company, the private-sector owner of the Ambassador Bridge, met to formulate a plan. What would eventually be named the I-75 Gateway Project was an undertaking of such enormous size, scope and complexity that it required closing two freeways and displacing over 100,000 vehicles a day for nearly two years.

By establishing direct access from the Ambassador Bridge Plaza to the freeway system, the Gateway Project has given Detroit-Windsor a competitive edge over other U.S.-Canada crossings in the Chicago-to-Montreal corridor.





## Shaping Michigan's Future: Building the Gateway Project

Pictures alone can only hint at the scope and complexity of the MDOT I-75 Gateway Project. Long before the orange barrels were in place and the construction equipment arrived, there were problems to solve:

- How to redesign the ramps and roadways leading to and from the world's busiest international border to meet 21st century demands?
- What to do with the over 100,000 vehicles a day that travel through the I-75/I-96 corridor while sections of those freeways were shut down for months?

- How to maintain traffic in and around Mexicantown and southwest Detroit for nearly two years while the project was underway?

After years of work behind the scenes – from creating innovative models that simulate real-time traffic to designing a soaring pedestrian bridge that would reunite two halves of a community – it was time to get underway.

To prepare for the major project work, pre-construction began in the summer of 2007. Mexicantown residents awoke to find local streets under construction as miles of underground public lighting cables, water mains and storm sewers were relocated and upgraded.





Then, in the winter of 2008, after months of informing the public of what was to come, MDOT shut down the I-75 freeway from Rosa Parks Boulevard to Clark Street and construction crews arrived. First they demolished deteriorating bridges, obsolete

ramps and scarred freeway pavement on I-75, and later on I-96. Then they rebuilt.

Pouring 165,000 cubic yards of concrete, laying thousands upon thousands of bricks and 9 million pounds of structural steel, they fashioned 3 miles of retaining wall, rebuilt

2.5 miles of freeway and created 18 ramps and 24 bridges. They worked year-round: men and women, keeping the Gateway moving forward, and often ahead of schedule. All told, the project created 2,800 jobs between 2008 and 2009.

There is still work to be done, like opening the ramps that will take truck traffic off local streets, and planting the 750 trees and 17,600 shrubs that will beautify the landscape.

That's what it has taken to build MDOT's I-75 Gateway Project.







## Creating a Bridge: Reuniting a Community

A Mexicantown community that was once divided in two by interstate freeways will now be reunited through the construction of the Mexicantown Bagley Avenue Pedestrian Bridge, a breathtaking 407-foot design marked by a signature slanted pylon that soars 150 feet from the freeway floor.

The architectural design by VanTine Guthrie (now inFORM Studio) was the result of a nationwide design competition seeking a capstone for the project that would bring a cohesive element back to the community.

The signature cable-stayed pedestrian bridge is intended not only as a place from which to view other Detroit historic landmarks, including the Ambassador Bridge, the Michigan Central Station, Ste. Anne de Detroit Catholic

Church and the Detroit and Windsor skylines. It is also a landmark for travelers between Windsor and Detroit.

More superlatives for this new instant icon in southwest Detroit:

- It is the first cable-stayed pedestrian bridge in Michigan.

- It varies in width from 10 feet on the west approach to 31 feet on the east approach.
- The plazas on both ends total over 41,000 square feet of public space.
- The 15 cables with five tuned mass dampers are all located on the north side to allow for an open view toward the Detroit River.





- The ingredients that make up the bridge: 335 lights on the aprons and bridge; 2 miles of steel piling; 2,300 cubic yards of structural concrete; 500,000 pounds of structural steel; 900 trees, shrubs and plants; and 660 square yards of sod on the East Apron.

- InFORM Studio, designer of the pedestrian bridge, was awarded an AIA (American Institute of Architects) Detroit Honor Award for the bridge's design.

Its purpose: connecting neighbors, businesses and economies in and around this international destination.







### **Realizing Mexicantown's Vision: The Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado**

Mexicantown, located in the heart of south-west Detroit, has a rich cultural heritage forged by working-class people who came to escape the political and economic upheaval of early 20th century Mexico.

Over the years the community has seen many changes: prosperity in the early 1900s with the rise of the auto industry, the struggles of the Great Depression, and renewal in the 1950s. But in the early 1970s a double blow fell: a downward economic spiral that challenged the city, and the construction of the I-75 freeway, physically dividing the community in two.

But the community had a vision. Travelers from the U.S. and Canada would make their way to a Mexicantown Welcome Center and new businesses would thrive in an indoor Mercado. In 1994, with plans for the Gateway Project underway, the Mexicantown Community Development Corporation partnered with MDOT. The results: the initial opening of the Mexicantown Mercado in

October 2006 and of the Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center in August 2008.





## Capturing Culture and History: The Community Art Project

One is a mosaic of handmade glazed tile, nearly 5 feet long and 4 feet high, a multi-colored mural that tells the history and culture of the people who call Mexicantown home.

The other is a textured aluminum form that spirals 12 feet into the air with a bronze globe mounted at its point. The globe represents universal kinship between two sovereign nations, and the aluminum spiral, unity.

Together, they make up the Mexicantown Bagley Avenue Pedestrian Bridge and Plaza Communi-

ty Art Project. Both were created by Detroit artist Hubert Massey who was chosen from among 46 applicants vying for the opportunity to create the project. Funded by a federal grant secured by MDOT, the art will be located on the Mexicantown Bagley Avenue Pedestrian Bridge Plaza.

This project is the latest in a series of monumental public works by Massey, a former line-backer and discus thrower at Grand Valley State University. His work can be seen and enjoyed in spaces ranging from Detroit's Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History to Campus Martius Park and the Flint Institute of Art.

In the tile piece, titled "Spiral of Life," a hand grasps a ribbon of fabric that flows throughout the art, with patterning representing the community's different cultural groups.

Culture and history are represented in the spires of Ste. Anne de Detroit Church set at a diagonal near the center of the composition and in the Ambassador Bridge and Detroit River set in its upper right. Also represented are urban farming and the migrations to and from Mexico.

In the other piece, titled "The Spiral Kinship," the vertical orientation of the aluminum spiral

interacts with the angle of the pedestrian bridge's center pylon.

MDOT Region Planner Andrew Zeigler, who was instrumental in making the project a reality, said, "The art project is designed to capture the voice and the legacy of the community. Many people have really embraced this part of the Gateway Project. The beauty of the pedestrian plaza will encourage tourism and have a positive economic impact on the businesses in Mexicantown and southwest Detroit."





### **Delivering the Goods: Team Gateway**

In 1995, MDOT initiated a study for access improvements to the Ambassador Bridge and surrounding freeway. Since that time, a virtual army of people have worked together to make the MDOT I-75 Gateway Project possible.

There were agreements between MDOT and the Detroit International Bridge Company. A Project Steering Committee was formed. This was a group of representatives from

public and private agencies and from the community, each contributing important ideas and points of view.

Transportation professionals from dozens of disciplines contributed their expertise — engineers, project managers and architects, traffic management professionals and public information specialists, design and landscape architects, and people who create lighting, water main and structural design. As the project pushed ahead, hundreds of

construction workers were on the job. As challenges became apparent, attorneys were consulted.

Crews painted lines and diamonds along Michigan Avenue in Detroit to designate the state's first High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane. Bus drivers from the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) piloted Gateway Express buses, offering a public transit alternative for

Park & Ride commuters living south of the project area.

Mexicantown businesses provided a variety of goods and services, and community members and local artisans worked with an artist to help create the public art project.

On behalf of the state of Michigan, we thank them all for working together to make the MDOT I-75 Gateway Project a success!



## STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Ted B. Wahby, Chairman  
Linda Miller Atkinson, Vice Chairwoman  
Maureen Miller Brosnan  
Steven K. Girard  
Jerrold M. Jung  
James S. Scalici

## METRO REGION GATEWAY EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Greg Johnson, Chief Operations Officer  
Tony Kratofil, Metro Region Engineer  
Paul Ajegba, Metro Deputy  
Region Engineer  
Robert Ranck, Metro Deputy  
Region Engineer (former)  
Paige Williams, Development Engineer  
Rita Screws, Detroit Transportation  
Service Center Manager  
Victor Judnic, Resident Engineer  
Paul Wisney, Project Manager  
Andrew Zeigler, Region Planner  
Robert A. Davis, Senior Advisor  
Brenda V. Peek, Gateway Communica-  
tions  
Rob Morosi, Communications  
Matt Smith, Traffic and Safety Engineer

## MDOT PROJECT TEAM Metro Region Office/Detroit Transportation Service Center

Elsie Atkinson  
Denise Brazier  
Devon Buskin  
Phil Capponi  
Michael Chauvin (retired)  
Twyla Chinn  
Paul Cristini  
Sommer Collins  
Cedric Dargin  
Detroit Maintenance Garage Staff  
Mike Eustice  
Mo Farhat

Sharon Ferman  
Steve Galindo  
Mark Grazzoli  
William (Bill) Hall  
Hunter Hinchcliff  
MDOT Youth Mentoring and  
Development Program  
Michael Hughes  
Emina Jakupovic  
Veena Jasuja  
Catharine Jensen  
Dayna Kraynak  
Leo Mays  
Randy McKinney  
Rich Ostrowski (retired)  
Deanna Papanek  
Sharlita J. Paris  
Hasmukhrai Patel  
Stacie Percell  
Ashok Punjabi  
Paul Sanders  
Ernie Savas (retired)  
George Seif  
Tim Smith  
Mark Sweeney  
Ed Tatem (retired)  
Roger Teale  
Seth Turvey (retired)  
Bernie Wells  
Dave Yarbrough  
Michael Youngs

## LANSING OFFICE AND OTHER MDOT OFFICES

Nanette Alton  
Kurt Bancroft  
Margaret Barondess  
Mary Benko (retired)  
Ev Bole  
Brenda Chapman  
Randy Deblor  
James DeSana, Director (retired)  
Gary Eiseler  
Myron Frierson

Sara J. Gross  
Phil Grotenhuis  
Kris Hart  
Kim Henderson  
Barbara Hicks  
Terrence Hicks  
Susan Hohl (retired)  
Charles Jarvis  
Tom Maki (retired)  
Gloria J. Jeff, Director (retired)  
Charles Jennett (retired)  
Deborah Jiles  
Ron Kinney (retired)  
Robert Kirkbride (retired)  
Lou Lambert (retired)  
James Lemay  
Rob Lippert  
Jose Lopez  
Lynn Lynwood  
Tom Maki (retired)  
Garry Mazurek  
Tom Myers (retired)  
Susan Mortel  
Lori Noblet  
Patrick Nowak, Director (retired)  
Eileen Phifer  
Sherry Piacenti  
Roger Safford  
Gregory Rosine, Director (retired)  
Irv Rubin, Michigan Transportation  
Commission (retired)  
Jacqueline Shinn  
Bill Shreck  
Suzanne Skubick  
Rick Smith (retired)  
Win Stebbins (retired)  
Bill Stonebrook  
Larry Tibbits (retired)  
Barbara Vowels  
Robert Welke, Director (retired)  
Brian Whitfield  
Kris Wisniewski

## OFFICE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ATTORNEY GENERAL

LuAnn Frost  
Patrick Isom  
Robert Mol

## GATEWAY PROJECT CONSULTING TEAM

### Prime Contractor

HNTB Michigan, Inc.

### Subcontractors

Alfred Benesch & Co.  
Consulting Engineering Associates, Inc.  
E. Austell Associates, Inc.  
Hamilton Anderson Associates, Inc.  
Illuminating Concepts  
InFORM Studio  
Inter-Lingua  
Lovio-George, Inc.  
Mansell & Associates  
Metco Services  
Motioneering, Inc.  
Northwest Consultants, Inc.  
Somat Engineering, Inc.  
T.Y. Lin International, Inc.  
TBE Group, Inc.  
Williams & Works

## PAST PROJECT CONSULTANTS

BBF Engineering Services  
Corradino Group  
FTC&H (Fishbeck, Thompson,  
Carr & Huber)  
Parsons Brinckerhoff  
Tetra Tech  
URS



## **GATEWAY CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS**

### **Prime Contractor**

Walter Toebe Construction Co.

### **Subcontractors**

Ace Steel Erection, Inc.

Action Traffic Maintenance, Inc.

Advanced Underground  
Inspection, LLC

Ajax Paving Industries, Inc.

American Concrete Sawing, Inc.

Antigo Construction, Inc.

Atsalis Brothers Painting Co.

B.O. Boring Specialists, Inc.

Barrett Paving Materials, Inc.

C & G Myers Construction, LLC

Concrete Cutting & Breaking Co.

Construction Testing Services

CRS/Shaw Contracting Co.

Genesee Fence & Supply Co.

GM & Sons, Inc.

GRL Engineers, Inc.

Hardman Construction, Inc.

Harry Fox, Inc.

Highway Service Company, Inc.

Inspecsol Engineering, Inc.

J & M Construction Corp.

L & L Construction Co., Inc.

L.J. Construction, Inc.

Lowe Construction Co.

Michigan Specialty Coatings, Inc.

Monte Costella & Co.

Motor City Electric Utilities Co.

National Industrial

Maintenance - Michigan

Nylander Engineering

P.K. Contracting, Inc.

Penhall Co.

Poco, Inc.

Progress Company, Inc.

Rite Way Fence, Inc.

RMD Holdings, Ltd.

Rohrscheib Sons Caissons, Inc.

Sanches Construction Co.

Scodeller Construction, Inc.

Shearweld Corp.

Six-S, Inc.

Snappy Hi-Tech Industries, Inc.

Tenmile Creek Excavating, LLC

The Pierce Construction Co.

Timmer Construction Co.

Wadel Stabilization, Inc.

Wess Construction, Inc.

*In memory of Gilbert O. Danz III,  
who lost his life while working on  
the I-75 Gateway Project.*

## **GATEWAY PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (PAST AND CURRENT)**

Jose Abraham, City of Detroit

Alex Bourgeou, SEMCOG

Ken Carter, DIBC

Robert Davis, MDOT

Fern Espino, MCDC

Ron Flies, City of Detroit

Margaret Garry, MCDC

Chris Gulock, City of Detroit

Ruth Hepfer, FHWA

Richard Hubbell, FHWA (retired)

Victor Judnic, MDOT

Vittoria Katanski, SDBA

James Kirschensteiner, FHWA (retired)

Tony Kratofil, MDOT

Dan Loacano, Southwest

Housing Solutions

Phil Lynwood, FHWA

Tom Maki, MDOT (retired)

Remo Mancini, DIBC

Garry Mazurek, MDOT

Tim McKay, Greater Corktown  
Development Corp.

Don Melcher, Jr., U.S. General  
Services Administration

Vincent Murray, Bagley Housing

Carmine Palombo, SEMCOG

Ashok Patel, City of Detroit

Manilal Patel, City of Detroit

Brenda V. Peek, MDOT

Sherry Piacenti, MDOT

Ashok Punjabi, MDOT

Robert Reitze, U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

Sally Rendon, MCDC/DIBC

Ryan Rizzo, FHWA

Maria Elena Rodriguez, MCDC

Roger Safford, MDOT

Ernie Savas, MDOT

Rita Screws, MDOT

George Seif, MDOT

Father Tom Sepulveda,

Ste. Anne de Detroit

Wendy Smith, DIBC

Matt Sosnoski, DIBC

Craig Stamper, DIBC

Dan Stamper, DIBC

James Steele, FHWA (retired)

Deb Sumner, Hubbard-Richard

Citizens Dist. Council

Roger Teale, MDOT

Rashida Tlaib, State Rep.

Steven Tobocman, State Rep. (former)

Stan Topolewski, City of Detroit

Tom Walters, City of Detroit, (retired)

Gregg Ward, Detroit Windsor Truck Ferry

Kathleen Wendler, SDBA

Paul Wisney, MDOT

Ray Yanez, Hubbard-Richard

Citizens District Council

Andrew Zeigler, MDOT

## **THE MEXICANTOWN BAGLEY AVENUE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE AND PLAZA COMMUNITY ART PROJECT**

### **Selection Committee**

Nanette Alton, MDOT

Fern Espino, MCDC

Regina Flanagan, HNTB Corp.

Victor Judnic, MDOT

Cory Lavigne, inFORM Studio

Dan Loacano, Southwest

Housing Solutions

Lynn Lynwood, MDOT

Vince Murray, Bagley Housing

Shaun Nethercott, Matrix Theatre

Eric Polvi, HNTB Corp.

Ashok Punjabi, MDOT

John Richardson,

Wayne State University

Rick Sperling, Mosaic Youth Theatre

Sioux Trujillo, College for

Creative Studies

Paul Wisney, MDOT

Andrew Zeigler, MDOT

### **Artist**

Hubert Massey

### **Art Project Support**

Jasmin Allen

Brian Heath Photography

Christopher Carr

Kevin Cartwright

Clark Park Recreation Center

Erin Sullivan Fournier

Fine Arts Sculpture Centre

Jill Nienhuis

Kari Miller Restoration

Ladybug Community Studio

McCrary Group, LLC

Alexis Noel

Rick Pruckler

Spalding Dedecker Associates

Danesha Sparks

Raymond Vandamme

Grace Yamin

## **LOCAL BUSINESSES**

Café con Leche

Coffee Café

Los Galanos Restaurant

Honeybee Market

La Gloria Bakery

Tijuana Restaurant







**CONNECTING  
NEIGHBORS**

mdot I-75 ambassador  
bridge gateway project



Providing the highest quality integrated transportation services for economic benefit and improved quality of life.